

Theosophy for the Future

Jeanine Miller

THE FOUNTAIN
OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH
IS NOT CONTAINED
IN ANY ONE BOOK,
BUT IS DRAWN OUT
THROUGH THE
HUMAN SOUL

THE CRUX OF THEOSOPHY, the divine wisdom, was expressed by H. P. Blavatsky thus:

Real theosophy is altruism. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to truth. (Lucifer 1889)

This note of devotion to truth, not to any personality or set of doctrines or concepts, sounded by Mme. Blavatsky and taken up by our leaders is far too often overlooked. W. Kingsland put it very succinctly in his homage to HPB:

She taught theosophy not as a mere form of doctrine, not as a religion or a philosophy, or a creed, or a working hypothesis, but as a living power in our lives. (In "H.P.B. In Memory," p. 159)

Our international president in her article on "Krishnaji's Challenge" in the Fall 1987 issue of *The American Theosophist*, gave us a similar emphasis:

Theosophy is in reality the living wisdom which comes into being through observing and understanding the process of life, not merely at the physical level, but also at the psychological and subtler levels of existence. Wisdom is born when the mind casts aside its preconceptions and limitations and moves into a different dimension. It is the work of the T.S. to be in the vanguard of such a change—a change which will help to build a new world order because there is a different awareness of relationships and of the essential nature of things." (p. 346)

Jeanine Miller is a research librarian at the British Museum in London, and a member of the English Section of the Theosophical Society. This paper was a presentation given in summer 1988 at the 100th anniversary celebrations of *The Secret Doctrine* in England.

She adds, and this is of fundamental relevance to us here and now:

The Theosophical Society can continue to be a force for the good, only to the extent that theosophy does not become another set of concepts or beliefs, (pp. 345-6)

In my experience of members of the Theosophical Society—I have traveled round the world—theosophy has become just such another set of concepts and beliefs. Far too often members equate theosophy with the set of doctrines given out at the end of the nineteenth century through HPB's major works and the other writers, and not with divine wisdom. They cannot relate to other ways of formulating the same truths or other approaches, or if they do so they have to translate the ideas into theosophical terms. What a terrible crippling of the mind! Some of us have in the past decades made the nineteenth century reformulation into a dogma which is offered as the pure fountain of spiritual truth. The danger of the Theosophical Society becoming set in a particular pattern of thought which centers around certain reformulations of age old truths is all too painfully with us here and now and most of us are not even aware of it.

The fountain of spiritual truth is not contained in any single book, *Secret Doctrine* or not, which can only be fragmentary. *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB herself told us, lifts only a corner of the veil — but is drawn out through the human soul. It is from *atma-buddhi* that radiates that divine wisdom that makes us aware of the unity of all life and makes us know whether a particular book or teaching contains a reflection of the ageless wisdom.

Having admitted all this, let us be thankful for the fact that *The Secret Doctrine* has been given to the world and stands as a unique message of that

principle of oneness that underlies all life; but this message has to be woven into the very fabric of our lives, and this we don't even realize! Yet the world, here and now, in our twentieth century, is unconsciously showing us the *living application* of some of the great truths expounded in *The Secret Doctrine*: thus in the scientific field, the search towards a common unified theory that would explain all natural processes by a single principle; or, in the political field, the nations' endeavor to come together in some sort of free association with the notions of essential human rights and of right to freedom and of compassion; or at the purely human level, the worldwide response of help in times of major calamities in any part of the world; or in the public's much greater awareness of our oneness with our planet earth as one vast living organism, our close relationship with nature, and our responsibility to work in harmony with it and maintain its balance; or in the advent of homeopathic and holistic medicine which treat the human being as a whole; or, among the smaller groups, such as the Wrekin Trust in England, the bringing of scientists and mystics together on a common platform, in a common sharing of experiences, in a fruitful exchange of ideas, something unthinkable some fifty years ago—and so many other such comings together. All these movements are the effects of a developing global consciousness and the living reflections of that one law of the fundamental Unity outlined in *The Secret Doctrine* which was a revelation to the Western mind, a unity that is slowly awakening mankind to real brotherhood.

The Secret Doctrine is thus gradually being vindicated as a treasure book of great truths which had been either forgotten by, or unknown to, at least the West; but which are now slowly raising their heads, not as dogmas to be believed in, but as the dynamic life that

vitalizes and is responsible for the great trends of our century. So Boris deZirkoff could say:

The future of this trend is full of promise, but its realisation depends upon our spiritual integrity, our vital sense of brotherhood, our unclouded intuitions and unshakable moral strength (In *H. P. Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine*, ed. V. Hanson, 1971, p. 10)

This calls for a profound endeavor which would tax the innermost resources of the best of us. Our international president calls it "human regeneration" and "the inner revolution which cleanses the mind." Before the Theosophical Society can take up once again the leadership along the spiritual path which it has lost, there must be a "regeneration" from within each member which, it seems to me, is the last thing we will accept. The whole idea sounds too much for the average member, but have we forgotten that the Theosophical Society was founded to represent a gathering of people for spiritual purposes, not just for disseminating theories that sound very nice or rehashing the nineteenth century reformulation of age old truths which we have been doing for the past 100 years.

Without this complete regeneration, this turning round in ourselves (*metanoia*, beyond our present state of mind) we shall get nowhere spiritually and our theosophy will become utterly stale, as indeed it has too often become. "The stale approach," as our international president puts it, "is that of turning back to the past, to recapitulate what others have said." But this is exactly what we are constantly doing. It is only through this regeneration that we can again become the living exponents and not the fossilized custodians of the Divine Wisdom. This means not merely to study with our brains such books as *The Secret Doctrine* or *The Mahatma Letters*, or

The Voice of the Silence, but to assimilate their truths, to experience these in the depths of our being, that we may put them into practice, that they may mold our lives and become a force here and now, not in another life. The best way to give out the message of the eternal wisdom to the world is to live it. The example of a human being's life is far greater than any words he may repeat or works he may write. Of this, our great founder, H. P. Blavatsky was a supreme example.

The danger is becoming stuck
in a particular pattern
of thought.

The next step for us as members of the Theosophical Society, or for theosophy, as I see it, is to assimilate what we have been given and to spiritualize ourselves. This process has not happened for us as a group—not on a sufficiently large scale to attract the attention and respect of the intellectual and spiritual elite of mankind which exists and is ever growing. The teachings are there, but we cannot receive more until we have assimilated what has been given. There are more and more people from the age of 25 to 45 whose minds are turning towards the spiritual truths, who are not interested so much in theory or dogma as in practical methods or a more direct insight into the great truths and life's problems. They generally turn away from the Theosophical Society, dissatisfied because we offer theories taken from books without the basis of deeper understanding. We know everything and we know nothing. They find us set in our theories, backward and crystal-

lized in the nineteenth century presentation, too prejudiced towards other approaches to truth and other bodies in the wider theosophic movement.

What do we offer? We advise seekers to read books on *karma* and reincarnation and the seven principles and planes, and globes and rounds and races, without the contribution of our own deeper insight. The doctrines of karma and reincarnation are accepted nowadays as self-evident among the more enlightened of the community whose numbers are daily growing. To keep rehashing them as we do, as a universal palliative for all evils, seems archaic to them and a superficial way of tackling the problem of suffering and the quest of the soul. What they are looking for is a less bookish approach to the problems of life and a better understanding of the soul, its needs, its fears, its hopes, its intrinsic rhythm different from that of the personality, its cycle of exterior and interior activity, an approach based on observation, understanding, and living experience. This is partly what our president referred to when she spoke of theosophy as "the living wisdom which comes into being through observing and understanding the process of life."

The great truths are not
dogmas to be believed, but
dynamic, vitalizing life.

This is the science of the future and the touchstone of spirituality. But here we fail completely. Man is in truth what his understanding is. We know nothing of the soul, though we can rattle off all that pertains to the seven principles. We are frightened of the forces latent in us,

the knowledge and mastery of which nevertheless form part of our third object. Regeneration means the sweeping away of all crystallization of beliefs and habits of thoughts which locks us up as in a vice; the realizing of our unconscious refusal to beat a new path or seize new aspects of the eternal truths. All weeds must be uprooted before the divine flower can blossom. "Know thyself and thou shalt know the universe" is an old Greek saying which we have ignored completely, but which is the very kernel of our third object, the true basis that can permit us to really live human brotherhood. To remedy this complete lack of wisdom is what I consider theosophy for the future.

Theories which remain at the mental level and are not proven in the arena of life do not affect people in their guts, or in that unique center which can alone be affected and thereby operate a complete transformation, the heart center. Whatever transformation there can be at the mental level, e.g. a different view of life, cannot cause a vital change in our daily life unless it touches that transforming center par excellence, our heart. If such a regeneration had occurred among members on a wider scale, the history of the Theosophical Society would have been rather different, the petty bickerings would never have marred it, and none of the public would be able to accuse us, in all justification, of being "dead."

Finally, it is sad to observe that the genuine seekers of spiritual truth turn away from us because they find us incapable of offering them a positive training in meditation which alone opens the door to the soul realm, to the spiritual life, to the assimilation of the *gnosis*, *theos sophia*. They know that full well. We don't seem to know it at all. This last criticism is rather deplorable for a society supposed to carry the torchlight of spirituality. The fact that we are



Photo: Pamela Sue Nelson

lagging behind every other similar association by some thirty years shows our complete lack of grasp of certain fundamental truths bearing on the soul, and their assimilation. Very, very few of us really know anything about meditation and most of the senior members are frankly frightened of it or else strongly opposed to it. One of these declared to me that meditation is not for the West. My answer is: we are no longer in the nineteenth century, we are heading towards the twenty-first century. It is about time we got out of this nineteenth century rut. For almost thirty years I have met hundreds of young people who are all inclined to meditation, whose souls have obviously evolved in the East in the past cycle and now find themselves incarnated in the West. Their mentality is totally different from nineteenth century European mentality. No wonder they find no satisfaction with us, in spite of all the treasures to which we could direct them!

We have at our disposal five or six wonderful centers in the world. One of

these is called after that center where one of the great teachers of wisdom lived and taught, Krotona. An excellent intellectual work is being done there. But if I may voice one criticism with apologies to its director—I know all the difficulties and obstacles she has to surmount—the training is geared to suit the outer work, the dissemination of and the way to disseminate theosophic teachings. There is no training for the inner work, for real meditation, that inner quest and discovery which is divine wisdom and which in its beginnings has a great need of guidance—not just individually, for five minutes of meditation here, or fifteen minutes there, which is futile, but in a group and under supervision. This is a practical method to achieve a spiritual end, "to know thyself," and one which we have totally disregarded. There seems to be no recognition among too many of the senior members of the value of this means of assimilation. This shows a complete lack of spiritual insight.

Let us try to understand: just as the

seed cannot develop except it be buried in the dark soil, just as the caterpillar wraps itself up in the darkness of the cocoon which it has itself woven in order to transform itself into a butterfly, so only in the silence of the mind and heart which at first seems darkness to us, can the great truths become assimilated and transmuted into our very own, our own inner knowledge, beyond all theory and book knowledge and belief.

It is in the state of complete absorption, in the silence, in the secret shrine of the human heart, that the processes of assimilation go on that will transmute the knowledge acquired in the waking consciousness into an inner experience of real knowledge, of certainty, an insight that is our very own and that no one can take away from us or deny, because we ourselves have contacted it in the very depth of our being. For in the silence, our mind is dipped back into that which is its source, the Universal Soul, *Mahat*, which is omniscience and comes back invigorated, each time a little more refined, a little more illumined, transfigured, taking back some flashes of that Supreme Insight whose roots are in the depths of Being. It is in this silent surrender of ourselves that the personality is slowly transformed into a crystal clear mirror of its innermost Light. This is the only way for us to develop that spiritual insight which goes straight to the heart of the great truths. Meditation helps us to break through to the cosmic level in ourselves. No constant brain rehashing of what others have said or written will ever do this for us.

Our spiritual regeneration can only be stepped up by the probing of our deeper levels that hide the divine Self. Thus only shall we be able to awaken the latent spark divine which, theoretically, but not in reality, we know to be in the depth of our being. Thus only shall we become capable of helping our

brother humanity, for our knowledge, until now theoretical and indeed well above our heads, will be rooted in actual inner experience, in spiritual insights and not just in books. Then only will there be that freedom that sweeps away all crippling prejudices and brings about clear mindedness. Then only will be filled the all too painfully evident gap between our profession and practice, the inner call and the outer conduct. Within ourselves is the secret of that spiritual dynamo that pushes us, human beings, further and further to greater realizations. We can discover it; we can live according to its dictates and thus live a guided life, guided by that within us which is the Infinite, and thus help humanity in a more positive, practical, and dynamic way.

This coming to grips with the living source of the great truths given to the world which we so far have only encountered in books, but which we may experience as quickening seeds for growth, seeds capable of changing our lives totally, is for me theosophy for the future. The leaven of the divine wisdom experienced in our own depths is the living proof of the truth of the great vistas of *The Secret Doctrine* and other books written or inspired in the nineteenth or twentieth or any other century. It will at last vitalize a real nucleus of human brotherhood where there is no sense of superiority over others, no "holier than thou" notions, and no boredom, no deadness among members; and where the other movements in the wider theosophical circuit will be recognized as equal contributors in the quest for truth and worthy of sharing in our own search. Theosophy is not a wisdom written in old parchments and rewritten for our benefit in a particular idiom which is already out of date, but a living, eternal wisdom graven in the fire of the human heart, in our heart of Heart. It is *atma vidya*. □